



NŌD 19

NōD 19:

creative works lie here

OUR MANDATE

NōD Magazine is a creative publication run by wayward undergraduates who cannot be subdued by essays. We publish innovative work intersecting between the literary and visual arts communities, seeking work that blurs the boundaries of convention. Push against the borders between genres, mediums, and ideas.

Defamiliarize yourself.

SUBMISSIONS

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For detailed submission guidelines, please check out our website at <http://nodmagazine.wordpress.com>.

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ISSUE 18 ERRATA

In “SALMACIS,” by RAYMOND GIBSON, the last four lines should have had white space where dashes were printed, and the last word should not have been bolded. Our apologies, Raymond!

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i think about you
 and what it means
 to be in oneness
 but you

escape

me.

**I THINK
 ABOUT
 YOU**
 BY
**A. (P.)
 ALKUBAISY**

a thread- through
 the open -cleft;
 open- chested,
 atop the -crest
 i- tread
 the -edge
 and- hope
 to -coagulate
 the
 remnants
 of bone *d u s t*
 and broken
 rib(cage)s.

**FIVE
CHAPTERS
FROM AN
EPIC**
BY
**MICHAEL
E.
CASTEELS**

Chapter 4: A Question of Fate

Some people call me The Milkman because my truck is full of milk and for my white teeth and strong bones. Also, I take my coffee with milk and sugar. When I pass a field of cattle I salute their brimming udders. When it's late and the roads are cooling frogs cross the highway. I swerve and veer, but still flatten a few. Why do they deserve a fate like that? Why can't I do more to save them? I drive on, hoping the answers will meet me at my destination, wherever that is.

Chapter 10: I Can't Speak For The Cows

I don't know about the rain. I am sad without milk. I can't speak for the cows who dream me into being. When subduing an outlaw I fire only the shots required. When squashing a fly I shed tears. Sinking to the floor, I'm a drop from the ceiling. I warp into a panic at the sight of a thimble, I want to eat my way through a cavern of cheese. I'm several horses galloping away from one another, filling the air with dust. I don't know about the rain, but I know what I like. I like to vibrate between dimensions, I like sitting in chairs, barking at the mailman—spoon collections floating in outer space. I am sad without milk. I'm very sad without a glass or a bottle. A ghost is sliding down the staircase. I can't speak for the cows who dream me into being.

Chapter 31: The Cattle Business

I was rousting some steers that had taken up residence in the house. I gathered a coil of rope and slung it over the pommel of my saddle. Some of these old mossyhorns had grown up here and had no wish to leave. A brindle steer lurched through the breezeway, scraping the walls with his horns. A twisty creek trickled down the front steps and pooled among the mesquite. A few cantankerous old-timers glutted themselves on cornmeal and beans. The rafters shuddered when the calves stampeded the living room. "Character is the thing," my father once said, "whether it's horses, dogs, or men. Or cattle for that matter."

I built a loop and twirled it above my head, slowly letting it grow with each passing arc. I dropped it over the roof of the house, let it slip down the weathered clapboard and then pulled it taut, slamming all the doors and windows. My bronco sat back on his haunches and the whole house trembled. A single moo slowly filled the range. We dragged the house behind us, westward, where the land was empty.

Chapter 32: All You Can Eat

Along the way I grew rather hungry. I'd heard good things about the new sushi joint downtown and decided to stop in for lunch. I was seated in the center of the restaurant watching the waitress struggle beneath an overflowing serving-tray. She carried it to the back of the restaurant where an enormous blob of a man was stuffed into a booth. He just sat there with his mouth open and she'd dump the food in. I was nervous she might slip and fall in too; she looked so frail, so hungry. She'd return to the kitchen and a few minutes later, repeat the whole scene again. That man could never leave. His feet were lost beneath him and his arms were just little stubs with sausage fingers. Mostly he was formless dough, a fleshly cloud that could become his wildest dreams.

Chapter 33: A Beating Beart

The dough began to throb. A beating heart. The phone rang. I picked it up. Yes, a flashlight. A rusty washing machine tiptoed into my room. My fingers scrambled. My sneakers sank into the decaying floor. My lips clicked as I ran. Clouds of dirt. I stared down at the crowd. I drifted higher. My house grew smaller. The beach was a slender yellow ribbon.

**BODIE
GHOST
TOWN
SHOP
WINDOW**

BY
**LANCE
NIZAMI**



GRAFFITI BARN, BONANZA GHOST TOWN



hums jewel tones
emerald, azure shifting
rosy with aurora borealis
angled trees daubed with cotton balls
squiggled across sky torn from a painting
real because i say it is because i see it
weird chill humped on pockets of warm air
fireworks crackle staggered like clocks in different rooms
at home i play image games with the cat his whiskers
piqued forward twitching, telepathic
whispers in the tips of his fur

STREAM
BY
**KITTY
HARDY**

i draw a bath, this tame water
its not the same the way my breath flushes
the air to a foggy pink my skin scalded
the way frozen dirt on the river bank
nipped through my tweed coat
dim light made latticework
of bridges stand bold black
even though they were grey
against muted stark glow
crescent moons tip my fingers rimmed in cream
sirens shriek the bridge boards squeak underfoot
the river churns under strewn blocks of ice
chortles in that trancelike way silvery voice glubs
up in bubbles help me
is what I hear how do you help a river
i forget we're in the city until a street lamp's
acrid blue light awakens dilated pupils
a blur how do i know what's real the
warm water laps our bodies we steep
in fermented sweat
the house creaks in the heat and moisture
i say it's alive
you say everything is

Stone City, broken
city, your trees cracked
at the seams, their limbs
strewn akimbo on
asphalt and collapsed
hoods of cars, your concrete
streaked with rust and
spackled with gum, tinged
black with exhaust

I lean against your stone
pillars, the cold bites like
canines, the chafing
brings memories of warm
sand on the backs of my
thighs, the traffic swells to
the sound of surf.

I hear the click of traffic
lights changing green to
red so loud in my skull
it sounds like skyscrapers
falling, dominoes in
the distance

I reach out to touch the
lightweight steel
beams, holding it all
up, folding in at the seams
corroded thin
as moonlight
from the chafing
of wind and
rain and salt

UNTITLED

ELDER

you grow tobacco behind
your barn, tell me about
the time a golden eagle flew
through here, “so big it
blocked out the sun”
you place my hand on
each plant, tell me
“listen to what it says”
i hear the wind and
the sound of rain
on dead leaves
you show me how
my intelligence is
reflected in the eye
of a crow, tell me to
catch that obsidian
glint twinkling, milky
white film blinking
iridescent feathers
shimmering
you tell me to listen
to the cacophony of
voices that gush
from its throat,
guttural to trilling,
eerily
human.
you used to call me
little pale crow
you gave me seeds
to grow my own
tobacco

Chapter: Plait

It's election season. Every politician in our area has come up to our front door and asked us for a moment of our time. Dad doesn't like to answer the door anymore, so when there's a knock I stand in the doorframe and bounce my weight off of each ankle to keep upright and awake. My friend, Rosie, helps me close the door about half an inch every thirty seconds. The politicians are too busy talking with their hands and they don't usually notice until we clip their noses when the door finally shuts. The bald ones are my favourite politicians to watch. They travel in packs and they look like eggs in a half dozen carton. Our house is the last on the block; sometimes they have sunburns on their heads by the time they get to our front door. Dad tells me that they're all 'wet behind the ears' kids. I'll make sure to get a good look behind their ears next time.

GIRLS EAT BUGS

BY

AMY
LEBLANC

There's a boy in my school named Travis and his dad is a politician. His dad came to my door last week and asked if my dad was home. I told him that my dad doesn't like to come to the door. I asked him if any women were going to be running for president in this election. He patted me on the head and said *President? Sweetheart, this is just a small election. Don't you worry your little head with politics.* Then he tugged on one of my braids and I wanted to bite his fingers, but now seemed like a good time to check his ears. I stuck my finger in his right ear and he got all red in the face and said *where the hell is your father? Didn't he teach you any manners?*

I don't like politicians.

Travis came up to me in class this morning and told me that boys don't like it when girls wear their hair in braids. He tugged my braid so I licked my finger and stuck it in his ear during recess. Now he's 'wet behind the ears' too.

Chapter: Educate

“We tried killing him with kindness, but it didn’t work.”

I hold my hermit crab’s carcass in my hands, his shell on the ground in three different sized pieces. My friend, Rosie, helped me crush him up. I named him Alfredo.

Dad doesn’t look up when the news is on. He’s watching a report on forest fires in Washington, which is far away, but the smoke is all over town. Dad told me I’m not allowed to leave home without my puffer. He checks my bag every morning. He has asthma too, but mine makes him nervous. Dad says that alphabetizing is good for his nerves. He alphabetized the boxes of sheet music that sit next to him on the couch.

I put Alfredo’s body into a Tupperware container. We have lots of Tupperware containers from Mom’s parties. I never knew that Tupperware was special enough to celebrate, but she wanted me to come and help her. It wasn’t like any birthday party I’d ever been to; there weren’t party favors, just a table full of containers. I think the containers could fit about thirty hermit crabs without their shells. We are in the business of empowerment. That’s what it said on the brochures that mom was giving out. I guess you can take on the world with Tupperware.

Chapter: Bait

They all gather around me. I take my Tupperware container from my backpack and take off the lid. The worms move around inside, all piling on top of each other. The rings around their middles scrunch up and release as they move. We dissected worms in science last year and I learned that they have five hearts. It’s because they’re so long and skinny they need five to push all the blood through their bodies.

“She won’t actually do it, everybody just calm down.”

“Go home Ruth-Ginny.”

“She can’t do it.”

“Go on Ruth-Ginny. *Everybody’s* waiting.”

My fingernails are coloured purple with sharpie. My friend, Rosie, sits in the red playground dirt with me and whispers in my ear.

Remember yesterday when they said that girls couldn’t do things like this? You’re about to prove them wrong. You have to do this.

My throat feels swollen, and I don’t think I could talk if I tried, so I just nod to her. My

friend Rosie likes to write poems. She wrote a poem in the end bathroom stall on the second floor in purple marker, but the teachers didn't like it very much. The teachers wouldn't let anyone use that bathroom until they could figure out how to get the marker off without taking the paint off. Ms. Ada seemed like the only teacher that didn't mind the poem. *Bouvardia* was the only word that hadn't been scrubbed clean off. All of the students talk about Ms. Ada behind her back because she went on her honeymoon by herself.

I sit cross-legged with the container between my legs and a nervous tickle grows in my stomach. These worms were hard to catch; I'm not about to let them go to waste. I lift a worm above my head and open my mouth wide. One worm drops down my throat. I reach for another one as Travis runs to the fence behind the soccer goal post and throws up. Rosie tells me I've done great.

Chapter: Variate

Dad sits on the piano bench and picks at his cuticles. We bought the piano a few years ago; I think when I was around seven years old. Mom and Dad took me to the music store to buy a recorder for class and I felt tired, so I sat down at the white piano. I laid my fingers over the keys and played Chopsticks; it was the only piece I knew. As soon as I finished the last note, a woman in fur coat glided over and stood next my father. I could hear her gasp and say *She's gifted* to my parents and that day the delivery people came over to bring us our piano. Dad's cuticle bleeds onto the keys.

Chapter: Domesticate

You want to know the first thought I had when I saw you in that dress?

You really should have shaved better.

I can't get the words out of my head. I feel like they're carved on the mirror in front of me. I go home before school is over, pull a razor out of the bathroom drawer and shave everything. My legs, my arms, my stomach, the back of my neck. I almost shave my eyebrows, but I call Rosie and she tells me just to pluck them instead. She says I'll feel better in the morning when I still have hair somewhere. I stand naked in front of the mirror and I feel alien and cold, but not ugly.

I pull a shirt on over my head, but it sticks to my freshly shaved skin.

Rosie likes words that have silent letters in them. Right now her favourites are words that have a silent h, like exhausted and character. Yesterday I read a poem she wrote called “Psychic aches.” She hates it when I ask what her poems mean. She says she’d rather I figure out what they mean to me. I think this one is about how people walk around wearing clothes all day, but don’t feel them against their skin after a while. It’s only when they take them off that they realize how uncomfortable they were the whole time.

Chapter: Lathe

I’m going to start with the floorboards in my room. I take Dad’s old tools out of the basement. I’ve hated the parquet floor for 13 years. I used to keep all of my old newspaper clippings under the loose floorboard; I’ll make sure to keep the same floorboard a little loose. I pull my box of poems and newspaper clippings out from under the board. The first article I find is about Dad’s old car company. He doesn’t talk about it much, but there were thirty deaths from the faulty airbags. He told me to turn off my movie last night. I don’t think he likes movies he hasn’t seen before. He doesn’t like not knowing how they’re going to end. Rosie told me to start using old newspapers to make collages. I pull out a pen to circle all of the words in the article that have more than four syllables, those are the ones that she’s really been interested in lately.

I hear Dad in the next room hitting the same note on the piano over and over. He sits next to our pile of second-hand self-help books.

Chapter: Date

I see him bounding over towards my front door with a red bundle in his hands. He looks like he’s carrying roses. A nervous tingle runs all through my stomach and shoots through my legs. He walks like a little kid somehow. Every step bounces. I open the door and he pushes his entire front side against mine in some semblance of a hug. The red bundle between us crumples.

“Want a Dorito?” he asks, sticking his orange fingertips into his mouth one at a time.

I shake my head. He touches my hair while the orange corners of his lips turn up. We walk to the restaurant with his fingers laced between mine. We sit down at a table and order our food. I notice through his shirt that his underarms are wet, he must be nervous. I reach my hand across the table, to put my fingers between his this time.

The man in the booth next to us talks too loudly. He sits with a woman in a sundress. I overheard them introducing themselves before; it seems like they've been talking online. He comments that she doesn't really look like her picture at all. He talks with his hands, almost knocking over the same glass of water four times. He starts all of his sentences with *No, no you've got it wrong* and then continues. I think he is trying to explain how the crucifixion happened. She arches her eyebrows in disbelief, pays her bill and leaves shortly after that. Then he sits alone at the table and orders a glass of brandy.

Chapter: 8

I sit down on the front porch alone. He tasted like lime and tequila. I didn't mind. He didn't try to put his hands under my bra. I didn't mind. I pull my Virginia Slims out of my purse and open the pack where it says *You've come a long way baby*. I blow smoke rings that hang in the air. I let the words hang there too, while it occurs to me they might be true.

abandoned canoe —
small plants unfurling pale green
on the rusted hull

squares cut in darkness
the closed glass of private lives
embers through curtains

cooling autumn air
in the arrow of seagulls
the one lost crow

white earth and white air
the landscape evaporates
taking me with it

a clear winter night
between branches, watching stars —
this strange homesickness

last day of the year:
in the morning light, washing
the smoke from my hair

SIX HAIKU
BY
**MADELAINE
CARITAS
LONGMAN**

**SUITES
FROM
STRANGERS**
BY
**STEPHEN
MCQUIGGAN**

The decrepit old house squatted under the celestial litter of the stars, faded with them in the early light of dawn. Water ran down its walls like an idiot's drool, as if the house had gone insane in its neglect. The curtains, which were drawn, which were always drawn, were brittle enough to snap, turn to powder in the hand that tried to open them. The wallpaper hung down in strips, sickly yellow in the small chinks of daylight that broke through and died in the brown air. The lifeless ticking of the clock fell onto the carpet, oozed into the blistering walls. It was an ill house, a diseased house and in its midst sat Albert, a running sore.

The living room was filled with the odor of ordure, his personal musk, an anodyne smell that comforted him, like the almost forgotten trace memories of roast Sunday dinners. The house had embraced his atavistic tendencies, reverted back with him, his squalid playmate; a hypocrite that offered the world a decent face.

Albert was surrounded by boxes. Boxes of treasure. Boxes whose dusty and sagging contents had not been pawed in years, but which sat patiently, knowing their value, knowing their worth. Boxes of treasure that Albert could never part with and was loath to disturb. The treasure of his memories.

Treasure like the broken table that lay coffin like in the corner, stained by tea cups that left crying eyes on its surface. It was made of pine, or miss you wood, as mama called it.

Treasure like the wicker donkey by the door, browning gradually on times eternal spit. When, as a boy, he had been allowed to stay off school, he would hug that donkey, kiss it, it was so precious to him. It had tasted minty then. Mama had bought it for him that time they went to Blackpool on holiday, that summer that Daddy never came home. Two weeks he spent alone on the windy beach, crying, and the sea had sounded so angry at his tears. Those tears were what the donkey was really woven from.

‘I’ll never leave you,’ Mama told him as she gave it to him on the way home. ‘My heart will always be with you. Even after I die, it’ll still be with you.’ Like the pennies, like the comics, like the chipped and greying ornaments. Like all his treasures. Albert thought himself a very rich man indeed.

The doorbell rang, an odd sound, unfamiliar, clean and sharp in that musty cave. He stared distractedly at the dust motes playing in the thin bars of light beneath the shuttered window. He never had callers anymore, not even Jehovah’s witnesses; he had invited them in but, seeing that he was already in Hell, they declined, left him to stew in his own damnation.

What if it was the police again? Or one of those Council robots, trying to steal his treasure? A mother was the greatest treasure a boy could have, he would ask her first before opening the door. He did not want anyone or anything upsetting her.

He picked his way through the boxes, a complicated dance only he knew the steps of, and tip-toed to his Mother’s room. The carpet was deeper there, spongy, dampening down his heavy tread. Just passing her room felt like church, the quiet, the waft of stale scented air, the awe and nameless dread. Inside there was a massive bed with a silk sheet that he must never sit on, it wrinkled so. It was so tidy, with all the little porcelain pipers, their cheeks puffed out, playing a tune you could hear if you opened up the sea shell music box.

Albert had taken a shell from the back of it, and Mama hadn’t noticed. He kept it in his pocket, always. He fingered it now as he listened at her door.

Mama had grown so old. She rarely came out of her room anymore. She never came into the living room at all, but she never complained about his collection. She understood the importance of memories, and her heart was always with him. He would not disturb her, not anymore.

The doorbell rang again, then again.

Albert hurried down the hall, splashing through a pool of urine, making frantic shushing gestures, one black fingernail pressed to his wet lips. After a few hard tugs he pried open the swollen door, squinting, as the early morning sunlight fell in, at the two silhouettes before him. A hand was proffered to him then quickly removed, as he flinched back into the gloom.

‘Easy on there, Boss,’ said a deep voice.

As his vision adjusted he saw a slight register of shock, quickly veiled, in the speaker’s eyes. The two young men on his doorstep were heavily tattooed, and wore more jewelry than his Aunt Vera. Not Christians then, but not the Council either.

The taller one smiled. 'Would you be after a new settee Boss? We've a real beauty here that we can let you have for a very reasonable price.'

'Where?' Albert poked his head out into the street. 'I don't see-'

'Ah, she's in the van,' said the tall one, whilst his partner jerked a thumb over his shoulder at a white transit nestled by the curb.

'But I already have a settee, I don't need-'

The quiet one was already pushing past him as the tall one's smile stretched ever wider. He reached out a hand to place on Albert's shoulder, but then thought better of it and winked as if to compensate.

'That's okay Boss, we'll do you a trade in. We'll take the old one off your hands and, for a small sum, exchange it for a brand spanking new one. It's your lucky day horse, it really is.' The tall one pushed past, following his partner down the hall.

'You'll have to be very quiet,' said Albert slamming the door. 'Mother mustn't be disturbed.'

'What a shithole!' he heard one mutter to the other as he traipsed after them into the living room.

'Hey Billy, look at this,' said the quiet one. 'Jesus!'

Billy went over and stood by his partner, looking at the yellow vinyl settee, a forensics' daydream of fingerprints, collapsed in the middle, a smoker's lung.

Billy laughed. 'Well Terry, will you tell him or will I?' He turned to Albert, mock sincerity in his voice. 'Deal's off I'm afraid, Boss.' Billy laughed again, and Terry joined him.

But Albert laughed too, and even it was brown and filthy. It seemed to stick on his teeth, for he licked them after every burst, as if to free a giggle or a snort that had become trapped in the fetid avenues between them. The flies, too bloated to live up to their name, trundled across the black veins of the sofa and fell on their backs, unable to right themselves in the storm of his mirth.

'What the fuck are you laughing at?' said Terry. 'You dirty old bastard. Will we tie him up Billy?'

'Nah, he's harmless enough, just a bit touched. Let's have a nosey round and get out of here as quick as we can before I'm fucking sick.'

They began kicking boxes out of their way, scattering his treasure as they rifled through it. Albert's laughter died, resurrected as a low, piercing moan.

Billy stood up, wiping his hands on his jeans, leaving greasy skid marks to the knees. 'Look at all this junk,' he said. 'Are you sure he's got something stashed away?'

Terry stopped rummaging through a box of Action men, the spots on his face glowing brighter, fueled by optimism. 'They say he's worth a fortune Bill. They say he's got it all hid somewhere, that he never throws anything away. They say he's worth a clean fortune.'

'I can see that,' said Billy. 'Clean rotten more like.'

He turned to Albert, who stood frozen in the doorway as his collection was so callously manhandled. 'So Horse, where's all the cash? Where have you hidden all the priceless family heirlooms?'

'You'll disturb Mother,' said Albert, his eyes darting toward her room. 'She mustn't be disturbed.'

Billy picked his way through the debris toward the fireplace. On the mantel, surrounded by bearded cups and brittle sandwiches, was a picture of an old woman, smiling, her teeth like broken monoliths tilting on sinking ground. He held it aloft for Albert to see. Albert cleaned that picture every day, with the greasy rag of his shirt sleeve; in the pitiful light his Mother's smile was augmented by a rainbow smear.

'This your old girl?' asked Billy, dancing the frame in his hands, pretending to let it fall, catching it again.

'You mustn't do that! You'll have to leave now, I don't want Mama to be-'

'Disturbed,' butted in Billy. 'I know, I know. But you know what's really disturbing though? What's really disturbing is how anyone can live in this filth. How anyone,' he gestured expansively around the room. 'How anyone can exist in this shit. Even the rats have packed their bags. Now, wouldn't you agree with me Boss?'

'Listen,' Albert's voice was calm, reasonable, the voice he used for the Council. 'I don't want a settee. I don't need a settee-'

'No, what you need is a fucking psychiatrist and a good fucking hose down!'

'Keep your voice down, Mother-'

'Your mother's dead, you crazy old bastard.'

'Don't you say that! Don't you ever dare say that!'

'She's dead this year or more,' said Billy, he sounded tired now. 'The whole estate knows it. Even you must know *that*, Bertie Boy.'

Albert stared at him, then at Terry. For a moment his eyes glazed over, as if searching for an inner, secret treasure. Then, shaking his head as if he felt sorry for them, he left the room, heading toward Mama's, to listen at her door.

'Let's blow Terry,' Billy wiped his hands on his jeans again, the only halfway clean surface he could find. 'I just want to get home and have a shower.'

'Ah Billy,' Terry made the little boy face that always seemed to work on Magistrates. 'But we might get lucky.'

'Yeah, lucky as a fat fingered girl.' Billy surveyed the mess around him, chewing on his lip. 'You've been sold a pup Tee, this place is a tip. We're just doing what we always do, wading through crap. Going through the motions.' He laughed at his own joke, but Terry looked back at him vacantly.

'Why don't we just give it another five minutes Bill? Guys like him have always something squirreled away.'

'Guys like him are usually dead six months before anybody finds them.' Billy sighed. He looked at Terry's earnest face, saw him buried knee deep in the detritus of a lonely, pathetic life, and sighed again.

'Okay, okay. Five minutes, then we're off ski. Just don't blame me if we end up with the plague.' He couldn't help but smile at Terry's childish grin. 'now go and get him back here so we can keep an eye on him.'

Bounding, out of pleasure and necessity, Terry navigated his way out into the hall. Billy looked at the black and white, now yellow, photograph of the old woman whom they'd teased, whom they'd christened Queenie of the dumps, and felt anger sing within him. Anger at himself for being here, for contributing to the tragedy of their lives; anger at the depravation that invited it.

He smashed the picture on the hearth and saw, in the corner of his eye, the grey blurs of startled mice. The glass severed Queenie's smile, it lay on the chipped tiles like a tiny gateway to Hell.

'Jesus Billy, he smells like a dead sheep!' Terry had returned, retching, one arm clamped tightly around Albert's neck.

Billy's temper flared again at the sight of the pathetic old wretch, at his tangled bird's nest beard, yellowed around his lips, his shirt stained like the Turin Shroud, at the wet, horribly alert

eyes. He felt it ignite at the smell he had dragged with him, a smell powerful enough to override the other foul aromas that clamored for attention.

‘I think he’s shit himself Bill.’

‘Listen to me.’ Billy pointed a shaky finger directly at those liquid eyes. ‘You tell me exactly where you’ve hidden your cash and we’ll be out of here before you know it. If you don’t, I’m going to set fire to this dump, torch the bloody lot, with you in it.’

Albert mewled incoherently, and Billy yelled in frustration. ‘Look at this junk! Look at it!’ he aimed a kick at the wicker donkey, sent it spinning through the air, crashing into the far wall. During its brief flight, a dull rattle could be plainly heard within its breast. They both stared at the donkey, then at Albert, saw real fear in his eyes for the first time.

‘Well, well, well,’ said Billy. ‘What have we hid in the trampy mule then, Bertie?’ Albert, his voice rational again, began to plead. ‘No, please, you don’t understand, leave it down, leave it alone!’

Billy picked his way carefully over to the tattered donkey, grabbed it by one mangled leg, and gave it a violent shake. Something heavy thumped in its hollow wicker belly.

Terry screamed, a teeth melting howl, as Albert bit into the arm that enclosed his neck, the grey and yellow of his beard now stained a vivid red. As Terry staggered back, blood spurting through his fingers, Albert launched himself at Billy.

Billy didn’t flinch, he stood his ground, decked him once, hard, feeling the nose crumble beneath his fist, seeing Albert’s blood mix with Terry’s. Albert fell in slow motion, struck his head on the dirty dishes sprouting like fungi on the dank carpet, twitched once, then was still.

‘Fucking hell Billy!’ Terry was trying to plug the large hole in his arm. ‘What if I’ve caught something? I mean, fuck knows what he’s got. What if I’ve caught something?’

‘Calm down, we’ll get you a rabies shot.’ Billy was distracted by the donkey. He looked long into its one beady black eye, then put it under his arm, grabbing Terry with his free hand. ‘C’mon, we’ve got what we came for.’

As he left, Terry buried his boot in the head of the prostrate Albert, the awful smack swallowed by the remnants of his scattered treasure. They went back out into the light, stopping for a moment in the previously unnoticed cool, clean air, letting it pull away their outward skin of grime.

‘Christ, I need a bath,’ Billy laughed, opening wide the van doors and throwing the donkey

in. 'Next time it's back to well-heeled widows in picture book cottages.' After Terry had struggled in, dripping blood over the number plate, Billy looked back, once, then climbed in after him, slamming the door.

Taking a knife from his pocket, he put the wicker donkey on its back. As Terry moaned in his ear, he sliced it down its dirt encrusted belly. 'Let's see what we have here then.' He stuck his arm through the hole and rummaged around, his eyes lighting up, 'Aha!', as he grasped something, and Terry stopped crying in his curiosity.

He pulled it out and stared at it blankly, until recognition made him jerk his hand back quickly, and what he held dropped onto Terry's lap.

'Jesus,' said Billy.

'What is it?' Terry looked at the decomposed, desiccated lump of meat, then looked at Billy. 'What is it?' The tears of pain in his eyes refused to let him concentrate. 'Billy, what the fuck is it?'

Billy kept on staring, then, raising his eyes to his puzzled partner's, said in a hoarse whisper, 'It's a heart.'

**ODE TO
EARLY 21ST
CENTURY
TEXT**

BY

**JOHN
GOSSLEE**

the hologram sings
the social network post

the alphabet pops
under a cheerleader's thumb

circuit boards fret
under virtual buttons

a television inside
a mausoleum

**BREAKFAST
ODE**

my tongue's bald
parable of the dirty tablecloth

ice cracks in the cold glass
the silver knife lays flat

the red fist of sunrise
big coffee cup with foam

split broccoli quiche
hard rain of teeth

**AN
INFORMAL
GREETING**

My inheritance is eight lanes of traffic
twice a day. No matter the swim trunks
or diet fad, I'm a pack animal
flattening the forest to a hit playlist.
A sample of water's whisper to god,
the dead sparrow maker, I'm complicit
as the architect with the building owner.
The world is fat around my neck
and I want to run, but the universe
is empty and cold, so I say *hey*.

My friend's curly haired father
leads us through the black tunnel
to a cliff wall hole over the river.
Our footsteps are whispers
against the emptiness,
he flicks water from a stalactite onto the rubble.

CHAPTER OF LOSS

Red dirt heavy barges billow by.
The green bottle tills in the factory runoff
and the banks clump an inner life
into the river's accent.

We throw a bent rubber hose
until it lays over an electrical wire
and toss rocks trying to knock it off,
his father wins and we want to play again.

**AS AN
OCTOPUS**

The invisible man, the blanks
on an unplugged digital clock,
the air between two mountain peaks
are my heroes.

I toss the covers off
and swipe for the metro,
stack contracts for my boss,
slog to lunch, brief the biped team
on the eight-fold path of trapping
a fish dinner.

I slather onto the roof ledge
and point at the north star,
until my arms are exhausted by the dream
and point at the ground in the morning.

I'd settle for being the snowflake that lands
on a light bulb,
but I'm a ticket holder
for an annual deep sea vacation
and my time share is coming up.

FRANCESCO APRILE





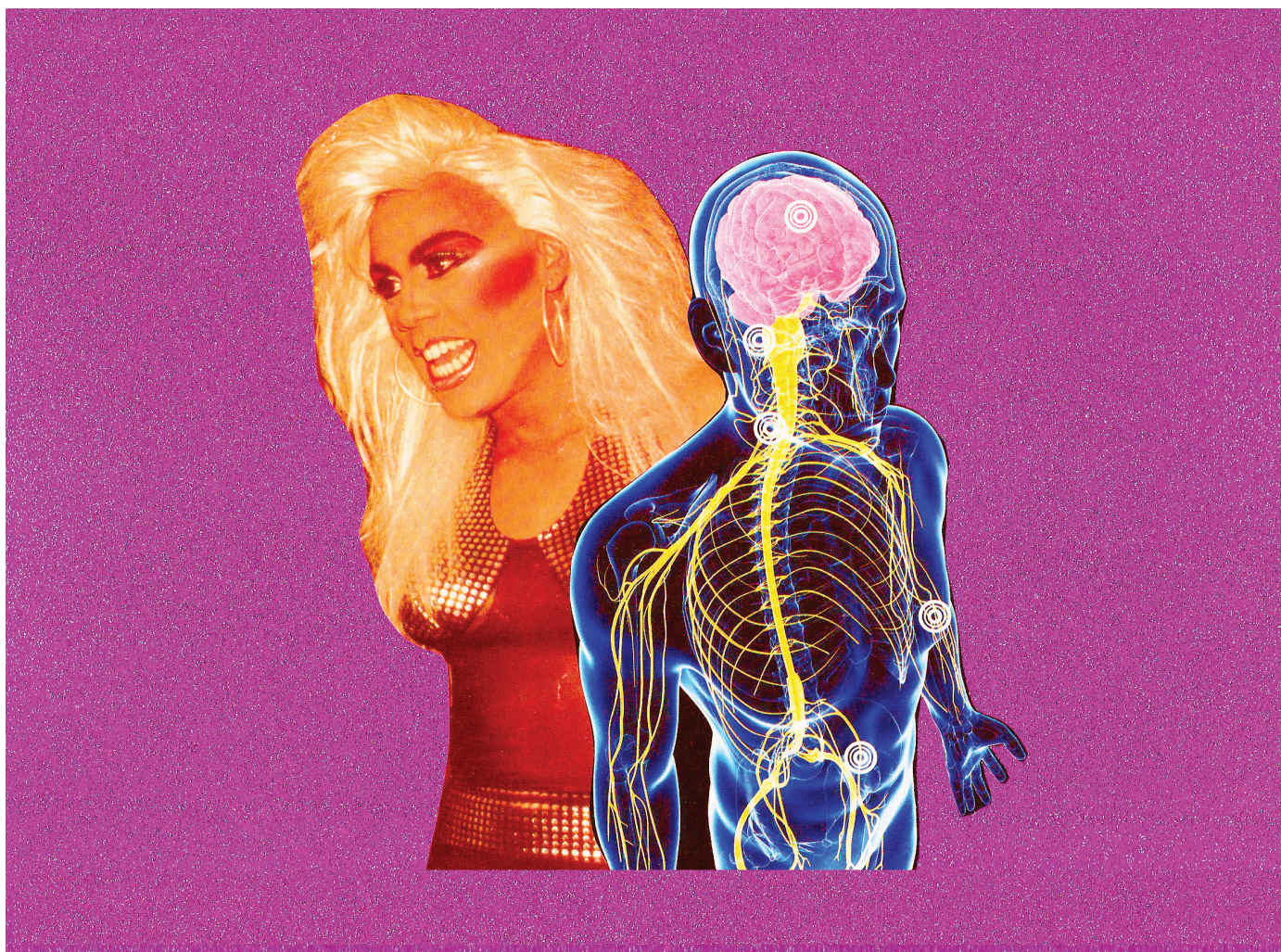




La iniciación

La L por L
 e porta a frusta a disorde del seguo
 o un guembo caldo d'amor. Ench el
 por el di e p
 de p
 de p





IT'S GONNA HURT

BY
ZAC
SLAMS

...The wear-and-tear scraper's apt
For retro-bolt
Or just-out embeddings...

BOX KICK 6

BY

**CHRISTOPHER
BARNES**

Worker Ant No.1 knows:
Demobilization is only thorough
At the mainspring of a gun.

...The wear-and-tear scraper's apt
For retro-bolt
Or lovebomb Tu\$;mB&d/g6Ds

...Inclined with Proban flap
It buffers the contraption
From pounding sparks...

BOX KICK 9

Worker Ant No.4 drains nail varnish
Onto ambushed steel.

...Inclined with Proban flap
It buffers the bloopslap
MFo7 d<2Pn_g| sS£aK2

...Atmosphere filtration coordinates

Externalize tip-top

Idyllic in-house production suites...

BOX KICK 7

Worker Ant No.2 fuzzes grease and dust.

...Atmosphere filtration coordinates

Externalize movewhap

Cill2+D siN-eo# dU,,,Cni}

...The air regurgitater servomotor's enabled
By a foam-wad clamp...

BOX KICK 8

Worker Ant No.3 sweats garlic
Under the duress of a filter-tip.

...The air regurgitater bunglelax's BlaD!\$e
y: (=daf+Am? cM2a/

...Hosing brine

Piped to forceful spouts

Is moulded against dripping

On wheelworks in troublesome quantities...

BOX KICK 10

Worker Ant No.14 bores the pump.

...Hosing brine

Piped to forceful spouts

Is moulded bananaheel Ppir~d#g [N kWwe+&oH

i: mT|7ou-Sreb tiTuan%q|s



BY
**CONNOR
GREY**



Mother, I can't see, I can't see, – mother,
There's only polka-dots, polka-dots on a blouse: faces
I've lost – faces I can't see – Mother, I'm lost,
All I see are white coats and men with stethoscopes and your skirt
the denim skirt, the skirt you loved, the skirt and the polka-dots,
on the blouse, the polka-dots that jump out in front of me

Mother – A man and woman, stand in front of me
the woman whispers desperately *Mother, I'm your mother!*
But I don't see you – Mother, I don't see, I see the polka-dot
Blouse, the polka-dot faces but her face –
I can't see, only the skirt that you wore, the denim skirt
See! She's stolen it, she's stolen your skirt, – *she's lost*

PROSO
PAGNOSIA
BY
ISAAC
CELIS

Too much tissue, the man says, *too much lost*,
the woman sobs and her tears stain the blouse in front of me:
Your blouse, and the skirt! the denim skirt
See! It's stolen by this woman – mother!
I can't see, mother, I can't see her face,
only the blouse with the polka-dots,

That jump out at me. The polka-dots,
Mom's polka-dots, like faces – and the man's face – lost,
He wears a white coat and a stethoscope, but his face
I can't see. His name comes to me,
But I lose it. I lose his face. I lose your face – Mother,
Where are you, please come to me with your skirt

Mother, that you always wore – the skirt
That you wore when you made lunch for me and the polka-dot
blouse that you wore with the polka-dots that jumped out at me.
Mother

Please, I'm lost,
And there's a woman trying to trick me
With your skirt and blouse, trying to trick me, without your face,

The one I've lost. Your face
That told me to behave, to stop climbing the tree, to stop tearing my skirt
The face that held my cheeks, that hugged me
goodnight, the face atop the polka-dots
and denim skirt, the face I've lost the, Mother I'm lost,
And I need you now. I need you.

The television

blared static in the living room

Sometimes

people fall in love.

**FORTUNE
COOKIE**

Her voice

broke over the phone

Planes crash too.

the bull's eye
the ridge of high pressure
a band of cloud
out to the west
high
cloud

clear spells with
some sunshine

FORECAST

now's a good time
to set your barometer

some wet weather
to come on Thursday

Friday
will be drier
and quieter

**IN THE
SUNDAY
MORNING'S
CHILL**

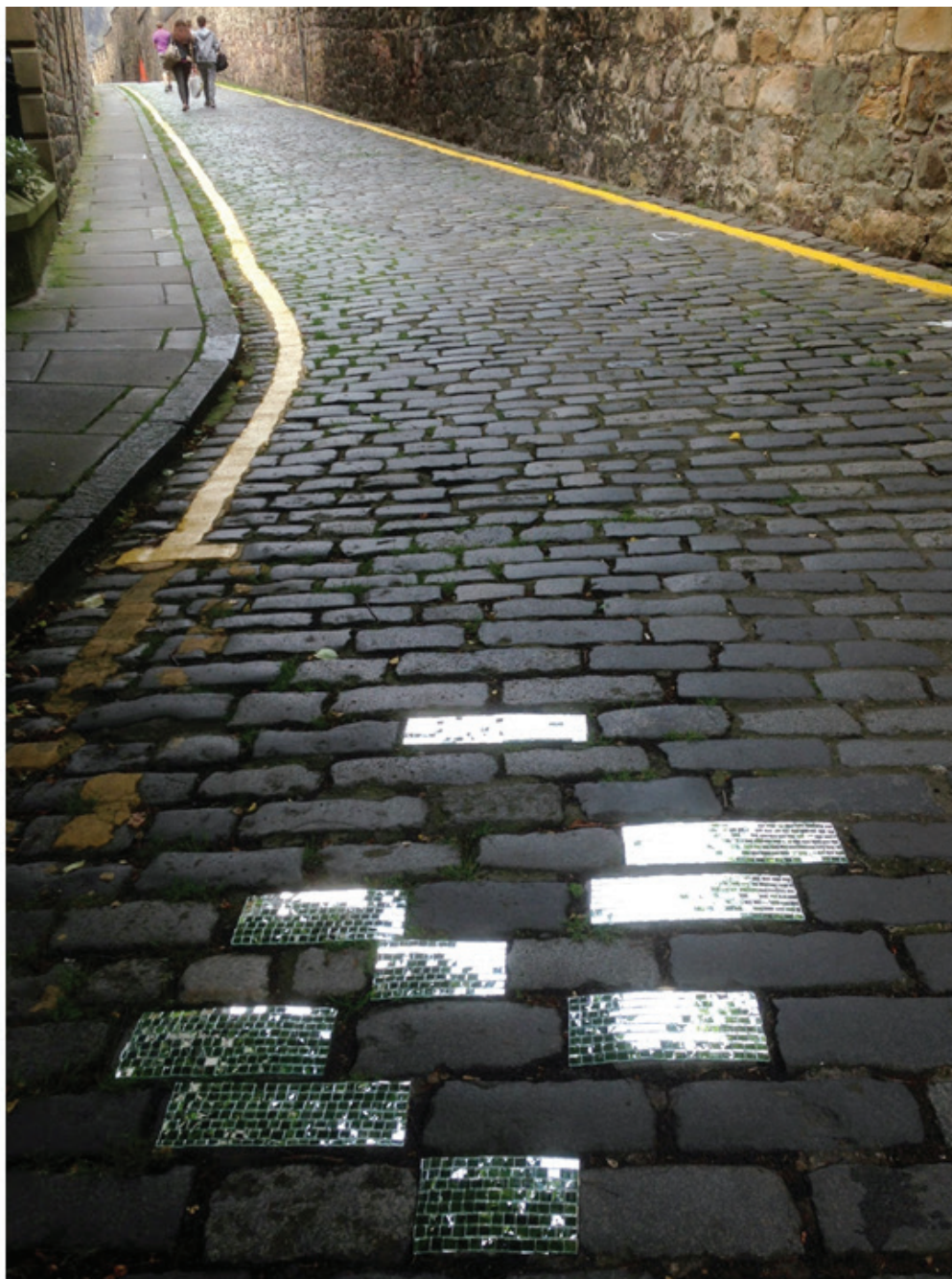
BY

**GUY
TRAIBER**

a frozen cock stands
on the compass rose
in the Sunday morning's chill
frozen is the night's moisture on the car's pane
frozen are the vegetables left in the field and frozen
is the brown, ploughed, field
the compass points are frozen in their places
the north a snowman
the south an hail mountain
the east in its past
and the sea is lost
 frozen
are the seasons too
and the winter, so it seems,
will stay for ever
 only the hand is shaking
 over the page

**CANONGATE
GHOSTS**
BY
**JAMIE
GRAY**





GRAY, REFLECTIONS ON EDINBURGH

I'm splayed in a bathtub brimming with hot water: a lobster, submerged alive, a copy of *Thomas the Tank Engine* in one hand and a revolver in the other. The cardboard-paged book belonged to my younger brother and the gun isn't loaded; the corrugated edges of the storybook are swollen, the corner waterlogged where I rested it in the soap dish, and the weight of the gun is both photogenic and pitiful in its flaccidity.

If you could see me, as I am, in this moment, you'd ask me why I'm still wearing jeans. I'd probably shrug and say something like *I honestly couldn't say*. It hadn't occurred to me to remove them; the bath in and of itself was an impulse, the lights being on is only the by-product of habits engrained, the running water was left running as a result of neglect, and the steam that has accumulated and fogged the mirror rises up from the water scalding my feet, and that's okay. You'd probably say something like *fair*.

+/-

BY

**CONSTANTINE
COMBITSIS**

It's not, though.

Not even close.

If you could see me right now, you probably wouldn't be paying attention to me, you'd be transfixed by the yellowed tiles unevenly set in the wall behind me, and the stain on the ceiling from where the neighbors upstairs neglected a leak in their own tub, and eventually the bone buttresses formed by my sharp ribs hanging over my malnourished torso, which would sooner or later compel you to trace the scant feathering of body hair up into the sullen eyes of an unclean wretch, lying in a vat of simmering bathwater, cooking in a clouded stew of dead skin and grime, with my nose and mouth bobbing periodically over the meniscus of the surface for air; an anemic crocodile, too lethargic to hunt, keeping moist, and pruning with scorn.

This pruned, skeletal body bends under the weight of its crippling debt to the universe for animating it and letting it thrive on the same

oxygen as everyone else.

But it's mine, and I only get one.

My brother, to whom the book belonged, lives in British Columbia, Canada, in a modest single-family-home with his husband Alec and his son Fredrick Jr., working for a publishing firm. I'm happy that he is happy, and it makes me happy to know my happiness can exist independent of his happiness, because, deep down, I do love the bastard, even though he got everything handed to him, and I'm happy that he is happy because the meds are engineered to make me happy even when I'm *not*.

We grew up together.

Slept in adjoined bunk beds in the same room under the same roof.

For the first ten years of our lives –

– until the divorce.

Fredrick Sr. was allotted to our mother and her new husband by the courts to live in Vancouver, Canada, while I stayed in Seattle, Washington, with our father. *Our father, who art in scrapyards, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, or your ass gets tanned with the leather end of a workman's belt.* Our father, who lived eight months out of the year on EI, and four months out of the year in AA, kept me, because custody wasn't a hearing so much as it was telling and both parties were told who got whom.

Before all that happened, we were close.

It's very long and tedious.

Animals raised in captivity. Separated. Reunited.

One wild. One domesticated.

The younger of the two still in need of his mother, as determined by the judicial zoo.

I used to read to him before bed from *Thomas the Tank Engine*, every night, climb down from the top bunk and lay with him in the bottom bunk, while our parents fought in the living room downstairs, screaming words like *cunt* and *son of a bitch* and *whore*, and often times I'd invent the stories about Thomas and his locomotive cohorts from my imagination while still pretending

to be reading the lines from the book. I had Freddie convinced that this one cardboard book had hundreds of stories in it, and the words changed every night, and – even though none of them were published, none of them were copyrighted, and I still couldn't read because I was distraught by the yelling and all the new words and just couldn't focus – Freddie lay attentively listening to each one before falling asleep.

I cried at nothing, in the middle of the day, for no apparent reason.

Bipolar.

I couldn't focus in school and often got sent out into the hallway for being disruptive.

ADHD.

I was a contrarian – back-talked adults that tried to tell me what I was going through.

ODD.

Plus or minus –

– Give or take.

If you could see me now, you'd think *depression*,
and like the rest, you'd be wrong.

I suffer from delusions of grandeur and an overactive imagination. I am plagued by the terminal interrogative running like a telegraph, stop, speculating, reimagining a future where I didn't look like the spitting image of my mother, stop, where I got to go to Canada, stop, and the submerged skin was starting to turn red, and periodically I dip my head under the surface, eyes wide open, and the water is stale and cloudy, and the soap stings, and I stay under as long as I can stand it before surfacing.

Stop.

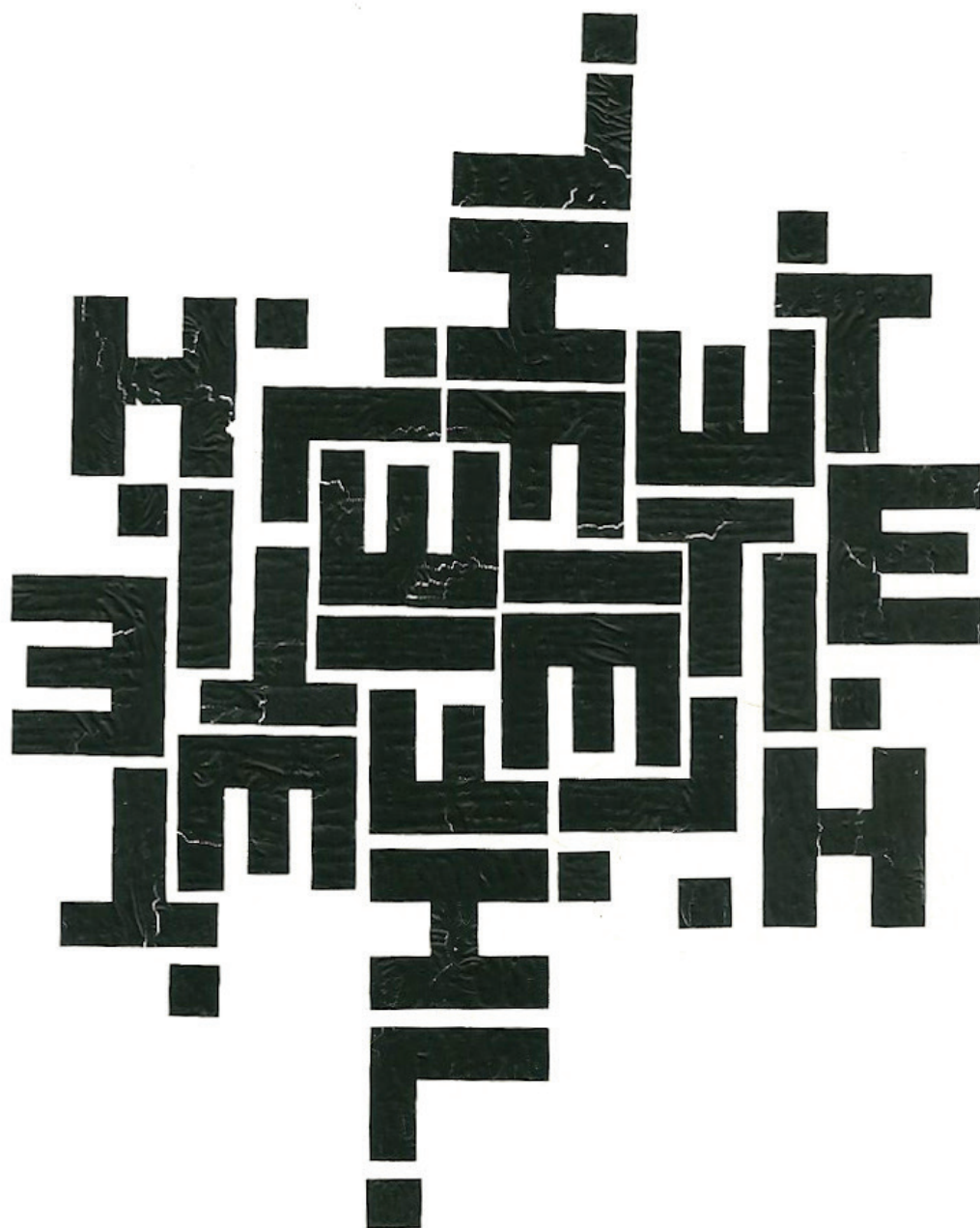
The laminate cover of *Thomas the Tank Engine* starts to lift at the corner and I peel it off; the cardboard underneath is now the cover, fine brown hairs matted by the bathwater, and this cover is more appropriate somehow because I never did read Fredrick the printed story.

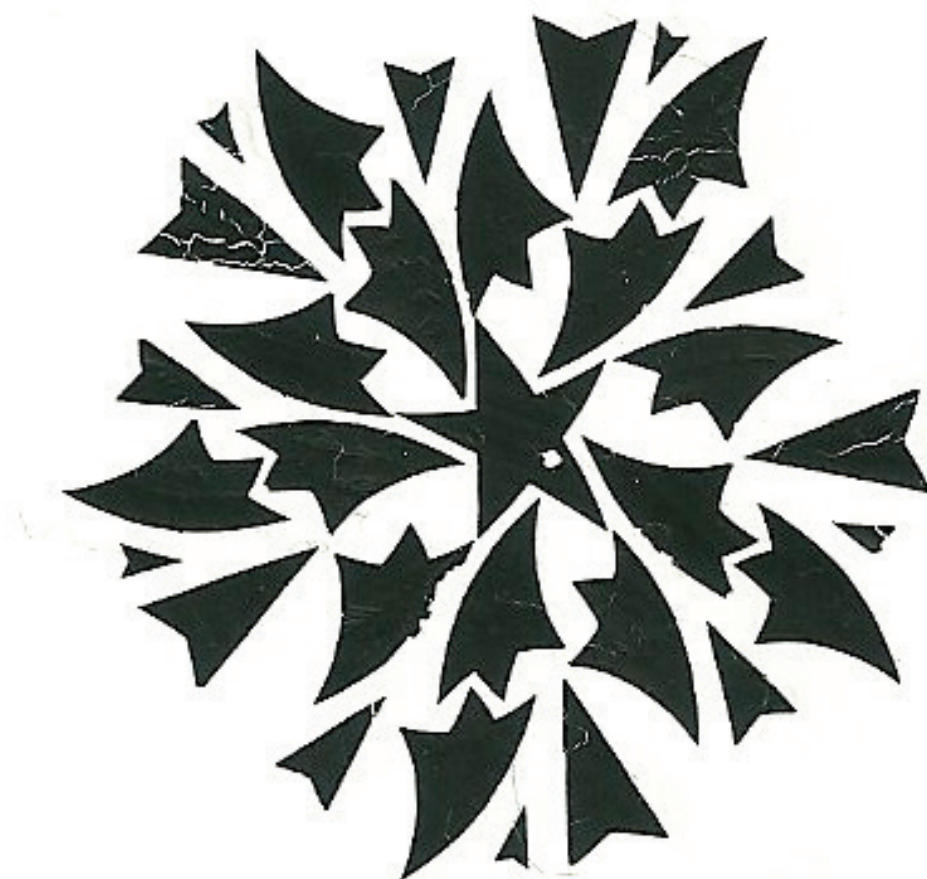
The gun that isn't loaded drips droplets from the barrel that has now and again been submerged into the tub, and with every click of the trigger, a little splash where the hammer meets the anvil and a dry click, like small fingers breaking, one at a time.

BY
DEREK
BEAULIEU

Eu i m f u o
ip Eu l m p
i a w i l h u
u t q k m
n l i t m b
d w l i n f d
e u i k ? n 3
g u u w

g t u l e n r a w h m 8
y f c x z







**NORMAN
PAUL**
BY
**PAUL
MEUNIER**

13.02.2013

Winter, the slippery witness of night. Missed calls uncoil in urgency. Eleven efforts, then a bite. *Hi sweetheart, call me when you get this. It's your uncle - - - he's gone, Paul, drive home. Call me when you're alone.* Salamander breath fills the void. I submerge and my uncle fissures out. *My father's brother - - - Norman Paul. Rough hands that twist my arm, tease and pull.* Traffic sparks, in blinking lights of terra. *I was born, and they gave me his name.* To this the mushroom of damage responds, fogs my brain. Occupies my lungs with fibrous pain. Silent. My steering wheel concerned with the *business of getting me home.* Pastels bloom and sunder by. The highway. A neon artery drools to my boulevard. Halogens land in a foam. I am home.

Magpies screech
and titter in the
poplar on our lawn.
Crude. Black jacket
bodies where the
leaves are
gone

13.02.2013

Sherry was resting, love. Sick, the sink of the couch. A cacophony of flu, with a bucket by her side. Norm asked for a ride, Paul. Norm asked for a ride. His spine was on fire, the ligaments, fried. An ambulance? No. But a doctor or anyone, anyone anyone. Sherry was sleeping when Norm used the gun, Paul. Your aunt heard the gun, Paul. She ran to find Norm, Paul. Your father's alone in his room.

Magpies

aflutter, chirp and
chitter in our
tree.

They buzz like charged
balloons, prick their claws
in the poplar bark.

Bits of tissue
trickle free.

22.02.2013

Leaden in the back seat, eyes, flit,
between my brothers. The bruise of
my father *we have to go in now* ---
the fluorescent mouth of my
uncle's grieving tribe. The family
bone pulls apart, soaks in a pan full
of dish soap and beef gristle,
glasses, mugs, and paper cups,
wounded pits of wine. The funeral
is Saturday, unassuming for the
families in town. Thousands of
kilometers for mine.

A tiding of
magpies

in our poplar,

pose as a murder of
crows.

Fat little bodies
with wings
tucked in.

They are oil and
indigo, beaks that natter
and din. Black coffee grounds splash
on the white sky.

The tree is a cage
and its leaves
have dried.

23.02.2013

Celebration Of Life, Glenwood Cer
Saturday, February 23, 2013, 11:00

Born on September 9, 1953 in Me
Norman passed away suddenly on
at 59 years of age. Predeceased by
beloved wife, children, grandchild
was here he put down his roots. S
Always a devoted family man, it w
a 49ers fan, he loved the great out
favorite escape for him and Sherry
the hearts of all that knew him. He

The magpies arrive.

Vexatious
and caustic,
full in a prattle
of code.

They flicker
in the poplar,
from thick beams
in its breast
to wires like bent
fingertips.

I am not in their tiding,
but they sputter
all the same.

Ratchet up the
noise,
chip off my
name.

They trill
and they warble,

watch me
as they brawl.

Norman Paul.

Norman Paul.

Norman Paul.

23.02.2013

My father's in a jersey, a cardinal
hue. *WILLIS FIVE TWO*, they are
ready. We shuck the unwanted
oyster, taste its black and enter.
An arena. Where hundreds of
strangers stand. I try to look like
suicide is not the thing we catch.
I fix my eyes on my father's back,
sodden, as he floats through. He
pulls my uncle in a red balloon.

The poplar

is grey,

sways

empty to the

morning

in a blur
of sunrise

on our lawn.

The magpies

all chatter

where the dew

has
gone.

BY
**CLAUDIA
WILDE**

To: all of the lonely girls
with empty bedrooms –
you cannot remove
blood from
white sheets.
you have known this
since you were
thirteen.

Let yourself bleed.

and the trees,
with their orange and calloused hands,
my dear, winter takes them, too.
and yet we have forests.
– *said the mountains*

**EXCERPT
FROM
DICTATOR**
BY
**SACHA
ARCHER**

To collect oneself, a person needs space and time to breathe. Here, as in other regimes, that means sneaking around. Unfortunately, the nature of going undetected under unyielding watch is that of unwavering focus. Such concentration does not leave much room for clearing one's head or the type of breathing required to calm oneself. Of course, I am no authority, I haven't figured this all out completely. And that's that – (because I know what's going to happen I know what to say and I type a bracket after the dash readying to say dash elongated and (*elongated* changed but what change dictator made I don't know it was a spasm of the word and then it was different and a blue box under *el*) raised, but of course I'm wrong, in the space which was the path to the bracket the dash had already been altered, but what I mean to say is that that path was already leading to these words, I didn't change paths I was heading here intentionally and I arrived) I progressed with as much caution as I possibly could and *authority comma* which is perfect somehow alerted dictator and was stricken green and I was pulled back into the ring I was skirting. It was a semicolon. It was the preference for a ;! And – (what did I just say about knowing a dash here? Zoooowhip!!) a ; is greened with a zigzag for not making dictator's kinda¹

¹ Because (*b* bloated and tacked onto it blue) dictator has never heard speech, a red under the letters that form the word that gives the sound of a reality a reality dictator will not touch.

sense and a snowball effect begins as then zooooowhip (again, again) an unapproved onomatopia for the sound of dictator's actions in my mind is simultaneously given the full red and capitalized, well the z not the rest of it not to mention the addition of the almost anklet blue, and the double e(x²)clamation mark is next greened though there was som (an e is here not there but was forthcoming before dictator stepped in red in hand?) delay a delay that took its time and concluded after the next a ; was also greened just as this latest one has yet to be identified but of course will be in time and punctuation³ which is some sort og (*g* to the right of *f* is hit and *o* and *g* together are hit with red) ending. I tell you, there must be a hill because the snowball just grows as *onomatopoeia*'s bare figure which is not the same form as a regular *onomatopoeia* is tied up with red and red also *clamation* there before and here now in the reproduction of it and some words later just a few *some* is marked for the tardiness of its *e* it never had a chance red

² I place the x where I would have put it had not dictator tagged the word with red and this way it is a sort of monument to the absurdity (and an altering occurs within absurdity and as aoften as not (I don't even remember typing that a attached to the beginning of *often* which was also tagged by dictator with red and *absurdity* and *remember* are tagged with short blue) / I don't even want to say that/ and an altering occurs within *absurdity* and as very often is the case I am ignorant of what exactly the alteration was) of what I witness.

³ So far no marking. Fingers are crossed. *So far no marking*. Is greened both times and the I of *is* that I typed as a lower case as it was not the beginning of a new sentence is capitalized by dictator who wants it that way. Then the *I* is greened and then it is not and then and now it is is this a mind game whatever then second *is* is given red and that's not a gift and second *is* again is "given" the red and again as it will be even again *the I* is greened.

zigzag below it. I dreamed about a paragraph of black and white, but it seems that era has passed into the pocket that also contains (an additional *e* in (it should be *is* but dictator doesn't touch that that (*that* beside *that* for the 2nd [nd [*n* and *d* reddened] superscripted which is not a promotion so much as a belittling and surprise a blue rectangle below!] time goes unmarked unlike any other word so far that's had its double by its side) is a window of triumph no matter how petty it might seem) unappreciated by dictator and dictator throws D red under it) black and white TV.

*

I don't have to tell you I'm lost that that's what I aimed for am aiming for that what I began looking to do is still my prerogative but not exactly where I am or where I'm going and it's obvious there's a tension ATTENTION! Just (it was this *j* but all that's changed) wanted to make sure you're awake that I'm awake – a tension and a vagueness those two together, in other words dictator here is my purpose what would I say without that? Something else. That is superfluous that introduction but can be related to an ignition i.e. a necessity and a joy and more. Because dictator is: *prerogative's* letters are not in the order I typed there was a hand that was not my hand which in fact was not a hand but a will that is empty yet continually doing doing doing doing so *prerogative* is no longer what I typed and as a result I looked it up in a dictionary but I didn't type *prerogative* and again it is changed I have no say. A green line a light green line is dictator's watchfulness and it's beneath *it's* which as far as I can tell right before *obvious* is not problematic or even incorrect but still the green line as if IT's bored and just needs to make ITSELF known as IT makes ITSELF known with *Something else*. which (I decapitalized the *w* of *which* which is not the beginning [*beginning* somehow altered automated gesture of mindlessness] [wrong bracket appears and I believe I'm

supposed to be thankful for dictator's guidance (e now a and a blue) I'm not = that's the point] of a new sentence but the continuation of a sentence that has a period in the middle and lo and behold! dictator can't won't understand that and again whichever it is doesn't as an exclamation mark is definitely the end of a sentence for dictator and dictator has claimed these sentences is that correct? Either way, I return to the *D* following ! and also decapitalize it which rids it of the blue below) as a whole is lined with green. Before that a *vagueness* for obscure reasons dictator holds TOP SECRET or simply inaccessible is given the green zigzag so it is a source of wonder but only slightly then a *u* is placed in *superfluous*/ pushes the *o u s* to the right and then there's enough room enough room for a *u* I had nothing to do with and as is the way in this system the blue rectangle gets tangled into the word. A single *doing* is enough for IT and 4 are too many 3 marked with the red of error which when right clicked are found to have signs planted near them by order of dictator which command *Delete Repeated Word*, signs that are not followed. The next trace of dictator is found below an *I* and a *T*, an ' which is turned the other way and an *s*. It is a red line as capitals were utilized and *utilized* was changed did I see dictator? Within parentheses *capitalized* with the prefix *de-* gets same red line or extremely similar red line the difference is length and position and in a different position a few words over *which* next to *which* lined with unvarying shade of red I find with a right click that sign again *Delete Repeated Word*, there is a difference between them dictator can't guess. A little round *a* that could've been an apple if it hadn't been a letter is no longer and a bigger *A* has taken its place, but what I wanted to say was that a consistant (it seems that *a* would exist no matter who or what said what even if it meant being marked by dictator and staying in places it didn't expect to stay and anyway perhaps the red has it dreaming of apples) green

broke between an exclamation mark and an *and* creating a gap but from the distance I view (old *reversi* an *I* and an *e* and *reversi* itself twice written bad be) it it might as well br (a *be* is cold or I've crossed another restricted border that's set off the alarm which results in the red) connected. *decapitalize* (I will again) is made to sit on sharp red here and there and then it's an issue with the proximity of a lone apostrophe and *which* and they too far are connected with the same connector as always the green connector we wait for never having to wait too long. Nothing, no sign, for a long period (of time) not a long period in terms of punctuation a long period in that case looking like this _____ but a millimetre higher – dash-stretch and blue block/ yes nothing for quite some time then between reds I've already mentioned an *it* by an *it* the right one is not correct according to dictator: RED LINE and RED LINE when a *re* is not *er*⁴ and either way it is *mm*. Dictator always left *millimeter* alone and only when I realized in the country I'm from it's the way that dictator dislikes did I realize it had shaped that habit in me, word by word, bit by bit, step by step until I marched in line (in)correctly.

*

⁴ Despite dictator's RED LINE mark I didn't err.

GO, GO, GO, GO,
 GO, GO, GO, GO,
 GO, GO, GO, GO,
 GO, GO, GO, GO,
 GO, GO, GO, GO,
 GO, GO, GO, GO,

The above square of text which is a repetition of GO, was an attempt and a successful attempt to type, that is, to go and go without receiving a mark. More than anything it was a kinetic meditation/ a place where dictator couldn't know how to touch. Everything the writing of that simple text was is gone⁵ / everything but the trace of it/ everything but its remains which are a record of a spontaneous exorcism that came without my knowing completely what was going on. Isolated, it works, the words are placed and no mark mars but in the end it is another system and a sadder one and a nice specimen and not to be taken very seriously I must be talking to myself. It was a fence that when left left *was is* and a second *left* to be marked with green and red respectively (I trust

YOU know which *respectively* I've weighed out)

*

⁵ But what is gone? The rythem rythem rhythm (third time's a charm when dictator sets boundries boundaries making luck and unlucky the flag of error RED LINE 3 TIMES 3 FLAGGED leave me in piece) [sure love what it misses and what/ I mean?] of fingers on keyboard a soothing repetition for good, a music. Evidently it did not drive dictator out permanently, never thought it would, so we have reconvened at *reconvened* where an *I* is frowned upon by way of red and *reconvened* where an *e* is dismissed and a blue box hidden and at *of* which has too much space for dictator's liking so's given green zigzag just like *so's* that's zigzag's red both times it's typed [and we have reconvened elsewhere/ how many times will we join?]. (*third times a charm when dictator sets theboundries thboundries tboundries* [bound-
 ries In [lower case forbidden at start of new line and leter (later I write later but not before an e triggers red pixelled identifier and same identifier below a renegade (a to e and a blue) form of pixel) R I E S added before In which reddened continues to do its work] red: dictator's gifts, the offspring of its own conceiving (beautiful deformations/ rejections))

ARTIST STATEMENT

Dictator is an experiment in reaction and revolt. Previous to *Dictator*, while writing, I had come to notice that I could not be sure what formal choices within my poems were my own willing decisions, or if they were conditioned habits which had grown out of the presence of, or in direct response to, auto-correct functions in Microsoft Word. The idea, then, that such a program, present in so many lives, could influence writing—that it was influencing my writing (and, inevitably, others’), felt oppressive and invasive. *Dictator* is the result of a decision to work against those present functions, a work that puts them at the center and exploits them as a kind of engine. The automatic functions irreparably disrupt and are the essential netting of the text.

**EMILY AS
THE DAMP
AIR TAKES
SHAPE**

BY

**DARREN C.
DEMAREE**

We left our mouths open
long enough that the moisture
between us found a tether

to collect and hammer
into almost a person.

When that form chose

neither of us to call home
we knew that it really was
just Emily and I now, without

the old environments.

I put one bottle of whiskey
in that space. I don't remember

what happened after that.

I don't remember if
or how we were saved.

**JESUS IN A
NIGHTTIME
CITY**

BY

**MICHAEL
LEE
JOHNSON**

Jesus walks
Southwest side
Chicago nighttime city
in bulletproof vest
barefoot
broken
beer
bottles
glass,
stores closed,
blasted windows,
mink furs stolen,
a few diamonds for glitter-
old parks, metal detectors, quarters, nickels, dimes,
coins in the pockets of thieves, black children
on Merry go rounds, Maywood, IL.
danger children run in danger
in spirit, testimony,
red velvet outdates Jesus' robe.

"How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land?" Ps.
137:4

He started losing his voice when I was about twelve.
On Sunday afternoons I would go rooting through the basement
Gathering odds and ends
Like a mouse building a nest
Looking for anything that might explain him better than he could
himself

I side stepped the old fur coats and sifted through that tattered issues
of Time
Before I found the box of long playing records
Still nestled in their original dust jackets
Marvelous covers displaying stars in pinstripe and satin
Ancient names like RCA and Polydor emblazoned on their sleeves.

LARGO
BY
**BEN
ROBINSON**

I took a few home and tried them on my turntable
But they came out slow & sad.
I longed to hear them the way he had
The pop of the snare and the trumpets blast
But the stickers said 78rpms
And my little Crosley only offered
33 or 45
Slow or even slower

The horns dripped out long and dull
The piano keys mumbled unconscionably low
The tenors stooped to baritone
And the altos down to tenor.

A decade-long discography
Now incomprehensible
Leaving me with a single black and white photo
And a name and my little Crosley
Which only offered 33 or 45.

**IN THE
WINTER**

things were simpler in the winter
when you could only wear boots.
i would always know if you were home
& how long you'd been there
by the size of the puddles
they sat in by the vent

but now the snow's all gone
& sometimes you wear sandals
& sometimes sneakers
& sometimes, nothing at all

**RESIDENT/
IAL**
BY
**KALYN
SCHMIDT**

i sit
like e. Pauline
row and
row and row
Blow, blow!
block / chunk / suburban / sprawl
side by side by side
between (other) houses
the West wind grows wider and
you never know the neighbours
here
bodies crammed like puzzle piece blocks
jammed in at cross-
-purposes
until all/fit/together in one massive ingot
-- that's one way to counteract urban sprawl
/--
my white lateen is /past wooing
but *be strong, be brave O paddle!*
the waves stacked up high get higher and
reckless; regardless,
the song my oar was to sing choked off
long ago in a silent bed
never a fear never a favour
rocked this cradle the hills between.

“the victim likely knew him: the killer”
“kicked in the balls by an italian girl who got mad”
“who saw love as odd as wearing shoes”
“was beautiful until his head fell off”

**CONTAINS
SEX &
VIOLENCE**

BY

**STAN
ROGAL**

“jealousy makes bastards of us all”
“hardened into instruments of death”
“dream wet dreams, my friend”
“there’s a stake in your fat black heart”

“let us teach sex in the home to parents: raw sensation: lacerated
nerves”
“black fishnet stockings that refuse to take orders”
“your doctor wears a butcher’s apron & carries a knife”
“misunderstanding & despair, finally, grim as shakespeare”

“absence weeps its respite through her accomplished music”
“blue moon, say, burbled in the sea’s filthiest cup”
“her worn pillow a hollow turd: echoing: echoing”
“icy girls finger thighs bellies apples in my feverish dreams”

**BLUE
MOON
(ONCE):
YOU SAW
ME**

“orange dreams wet to wakefulness”
“the tongue lodged in the throat”
“wine bottle broke: things lost in the sand”
“where, w/o preface, music trails”

“to compose a blues song is to regiment riots”
“I sizzle in its electric blue volts like a desert prophet”
“eyes vacant as knot holes; unaccepting a world prised of fragments”
“blame memory for the fault: my love with other guys: goes: gone”

HIGHER EDUCATION

“press the easy lure of matchbook cover education”

“learn to be a plumber, a key-punch operator, a gestalt therapist”

“learn to tell time by bell, book & candle: achieve anathema”

“be a private dick at a public urinal: a blood-sucking vampire”

“obtain the degrees, the jobs, the dollars”

“master the holy game of poker”

“become prolific at palmistry”

“be the ghost writer in the machine”

“who eat reality sandwiches never fail to amaze”

“a sucker born every minute lined up for a boo at the dog-faced boy”

“who hammer swords from ploughshares: bombs from deep-fryers”

“be an all-american home-grown terrorist: blow cover before
striking”

“chisels blunt primary emotions into forms that look classical”
“a liberating satisfaction in the coming bloodshed”
“the guilty match that began the whole chicago fire”
“death is an artifact like any other”

**DEATH
ON THE
INSTALLMENT
PLAN**

“radiation turned it white”
“sections of my brain grow teeth”
“not a leaf: not a bird”
“beasts with flesh-battered claws”

“I have no wish to continue my debate with men”
“to desire electric intercourse with a female alligator”
“if only life left us with metaphors: e.g.:...”
“[in the dead of night: the heavy scent of cherry blossoms, falling]”

DIAGNOSIS

“severe melancholia, advanced alcohol dependence; schizophrenic”
“that appeared to sit so solidly, made of wood & glass & wires”
“white-uniformed vampires drank my blood for a year (longer)”
“minute losses compared to the light bulb gone from my brain”

“friends called me pig-eye”
“silent & straight as a shovel”
“withdrawn in the sexy wingding”
“ah, splendid & strange!”

“dedicated to all those who betrayed me at one time or another”
“the new vaginal hysterectomy that brought me to berlin”
“ich bin ein berliner: a jelly donut made unfit for the mass”
“teeth fed on my most private parts: a hole where a crotch should be”

ARTIST STATEMENT

These poems are comprised of sometimes verbatim, sometimes doctored texts, lifted from a variety of sources: poetry, art, advertising, pop culture, pop songs, movies, sports, puns, the media, scientific and religious tracts and so on. The quotation marks offer a semblance (perhaps false) of equality, authenticity and authority. These found snippets, along with original snatches of verbiage (verb-barrage), are put together to form a new, original text, in a manner akin to William S Burroughs' "Cut-up" method. The work also takes a cue from Robert Creeley: rather than the poet imposing a theme, the found phrases inform the thematic as the poem is continuously under construction. The pieces beg the questions: What makes a poem? What makes a line poetic? What makes a text original?

FROM
COMPOSED
ANACHRONISMS
BY
IAN WHISTLE

o assertions
o cheating melodies
chords of singing or both or plenty
the letters of separated tones
observing a silence
pitch
perfect in no way
o time to time
o procedure
o run back to register
aggregate
higher octaves when necessary
picker pick or pluck

With a groan, I roll myself the whole foot from my mattress onto the floor. The scuffs in the hardwood scratch my cheeks, but I pick myself up and tramp into the washroom. The faucet is dripping again. I just turn the cold water on and splash my face with it. When I look up, I find the mirror is streaked with red lipstick.

WE ARE THE LIBERTINES, the words shout, bursting from tinted wax. The lines themselves seem to smoulder at the edges, a little bit obscene. A bottle of Punk pale ale stands sentinel by my toothbrush jar, seemingly bearing witness to last night's acts of vandalism. Fittingly, a sanguine smudge still curls around its lip.

A pretty sentiment. I wipe at it with tissue paper anyway, because what does that even mean? Some of the lines are more stubborn than others. **V—IB—ES** still remains afterward, but the colour is more fading strawberry than bleeding velvet now, at least.

The couch in my living room creaks and a girl's sigh filters through the apartment. She sounds a bit like I do when I sift through my memories to decide which ones I should disown. The first week I was here, some overly familiar stranger told me never to crash on someone's couch, called it *an essential life skill, compressed into a single shot glass*. It was really much more eloquent in French.

I almost gag on my own breath when I shout out *Hey, bon vivant, you better not have puked on my floor*, because the vowels taste like cheap vodka and stale hops.

Her responding giggle reverberates through my door frame. She says, *Une meuf, you underestimate me*, wholly unfamiliar. I would have remembered her Parisian accent coiling around the base of my spine if we'd met before. I clear my throat, snort a little.

You French are all the same; can't hold any real liquor. Must be

L'INCENDIE

BY

KATHY
PHAM

all the wine and cheese.

My visitor can't see me smirking, but she must hear it because she bites back, *It's called class; naturally a Yankee expat would find it quite foreign.*

I'm about to ask her who she is, but I hear the springs in my couch bounce. The sticky plod of her bare feet comes closer.

The girl peeks her head into the bathroom first, her fingers curling around the doorframe. Her lips are stained deep as carmine, but the colour tears away when it hits the sharp ridges of her mouth. I raise my eyebrow at her. She takes the gesture as permission to invade my space, yet contorts so that her limbs never graze my own. She pushes the Punk bottle aside, retrieves a bullet of lipstick from behind it. It's ruined, but she snaps the cap back on and slips it into her back pocket regardless.

Looking up at the remains of the philosophy on my mirror, she grins, *Did you dislike my little touch of decadence so much?*

I shrug, edge away. I wrap my hands over my mouth so that my breath doesn't hit her when I say— I didn't get it.

The edges of her lips crumple together, a hum escaping. She rubs at the wax on the mirror with her thumb— looks at the stain, then looks at me, takes a step closer. Her knee jams into mine, my heel clatters against the shower door.

She swipes a bit of rouge onto my cheek. Her fingernail scratches me.
Well, you are one, she says.

She sways backwards out of the room, smiling now. Her dimples form two promises beside the corners of her grin. Her plod turns into an echo through the cardboard walls, then the door to my apartment opens and shuts. She doesn't leave anything behind but a dip in the couch.

I could have asked around for a name, found out who brought her to my flat for that party. I don't. Named things have too much of a taste to them. Something like permanence. I had to Windex the lipstick off in the end.

I could have sworn I packed Schiller when I was leaving, but there's a conspicuous hole between my bookends. Out of all the things someone could steal, it baffles me that they had to take *The Aesthetic Education of Man*, a leftover from days spent between assignments. My Skype rings while I'm leafing through the spines, but I pick up, hold my phone so that the angle makes my chin slimmer. I smile— *Hey, Babe*.

He chuckles back at me, and it sounds like we're listening to each other through a tin can walkie-talkie. Stubble's growing like a minefield around his mouth. His lips are pale, like a mauve that's been washed too many times over these years. Behind him, I can hear the car honks of rush hour traffic. I traded the sounds of Portlandia for something else.

What have you been up to? You haven't been online for a few days, he says. I can see wrinkles in his lips folding together while he talks. *I was worried*.

I tell him, *Sorry. I threw a party. Things got a little hazy. Don't they always around you?* And I have to laugh because yeah. Yeah, maybe that's true. Maybe he knows me. *How is your article going?* He asks.

I tell him, *It's getting written. I just need to do some more research*.

This club is holed away in the ruins of an old parliament building. The DJ's playing a bootleg of Housse de Racket. We all sway along to it, pretending we know how to dance. She spots me before I spot her. Compared to the bare concrete of the floor and the posters that makeshift for wallpaper, her silhouette juts out at obtuse angles. She clips her elbow through mine and pulls me toward the fire escape.

November's frigidity pulls our breath out in puffs when we emerge in the street. She digs through her trench coat, then pulls out a slim volume.

I wondered if I would have a chance to give this back to you, she says, without any trace of apology.

I reach for the Schiller, thumb through the dog-eared pages and see her pen in the margins. *So you're a vandal, a thief, and a hopeless romantic?*

She rolls her shoulders back, giggles. *His letters are quite beautiful. I couldn't resist.*

The corner of my mouth twitches, teasing, *Did you learn anything?*

Only that the secret of life is play, she shrugs. I almost miss the roll of her eyes.

In the dimness between the street lamps, I have trouble believing that she exists. Her outline is so seamless she could probably seep between the cracks in the pavement. She turns away, then I hear the flick of a lighter. The flame brightens the red of her mouth when she lights up her cigarette. When she exhales, the smoke plumes over her shoulder like a wisp of a hair.

She doesn't offer me one. There isn't an ashtray on my coffee table. *So, why did you come to Paris?* She asks, weaving her words around the smoke.

I answer, *Well, 'fluctuat nec mergitur', right?*

You Americans are very annoying, and your Latin is atrocious, she says.

I reconsider, say *I wanted to sleep on a bench in Place de la Concord before I died.*

She asks me if I really did. I tell her I was there for an hour before a policeman told me to get moving. It makes her laugh. *Tourist garbage*, she says, *But, I suppose you've figured that out by now.* Then she's tugging me down the street, her fingers barely touching my jacket. *Come, they sell Vietnamese subs over here. This playing has made me hungry.*

She punches her number into my phone after, calls herself *Bon Vivant*.

His text reads *hey, MIA again i see*. I see it only because it flashes over my screen while I'm burning her phone number into my retinas, trying to see if there's a cipher in the ten digits. Something that will let me solve her, x-ray into her skull. Maybe, after that, I will understand what it is that lets her haunt me through my stairwell and into the alleyways behind the clubs.

I throw my phone across the mattress. It skids over the edge and clatters onto the floor. It beeps at me again, and then the ringing starts. I should answer, but instead I tip, too full on one side. The ringing continues until it's just a bone thin echo, until the sun droops beneath the corner of a rooftop somewhere, and I spin further and further into the floor.

“Paris. That which is tossed by the waves but does not sink. The waves of a revolution, of freedom, or modernity, perhaps. This city is not what the postcards say it will be, though I think I prefer being able to see the lime stains and the gum pancaked to the sidewalk. I like that rusted coins gather at the bottom of the fountains. I’m tourist trash of a different ilk, but the other club rats seem to forgive me for my faltering French, my misappropriation of their twisty words.

I prefer the night life to the ancient chapels. In the day, there are too many people fighting for attention, it’s too easy to drown in the crowd. In the dark, though, it’s a collective drowning. The filthier the club, the better. I can drink up the miasma in the air, sway to the rhythm without understanding any of the words. There’s a transgression to it all, a rebellion. I can hear it in the slap of flesh, the thrum of Housse.”

My article comes out as 1000 words of waxing thematic about the profanity of the French underground. It pays my rent in the 19th Arrondissement, so I can’t complain. When I proposed the series to Pitchfork, they begged for more.

I pull out my phone to tell him I did it, that I’ll send him the draft. Instead, I let my thumb hover over her name. I don’t hit call. There are such things as lines, like the ones that divide oceans, and the thinner ones that separate people.

I’m hovering over her name on my phone again when he calls me.

Hi. I say, biting at my lips at the same time.

He begins with *Hey, do you want to count down the New Year with me?* And behind it, an unspoken *if you’re not too busy* hangs off the end of his sentence. He can’t see the flash of a smile that crosses my face before I draw blood.

I was actually, um. I falter, but my teeth close over a bit of skin and I tear it off. *I think maybe we should stop this.*

Silence, and then a sigh that comes from far away, a moment that I should not have heard, that I did, anyway.

Will you tell me why?

It's because of Paris. It's because of Schiller. It's because of the smoke and the filth and the imbalance. It's because of her silhouette. It's the message she scrawled on my mirror.

Because I loved you, is what tumbles out instead. *Because I won't lie to you*.

You met someone. It's not a question. It's a fact like poured concrete, already sinking beneath my feet.

No. I learned something.

I swipe at my cheek, as if the scratch of her fingernail still remains, buried between the layers of my skin.

She meets me outside my apartment building, windswept. The club still clings to the sweat on her skin. I didn't call her with a plan in mind, but I lead her up the fire escape that slithers up the side of the building from an alleyway. We step over shards of glass and rotting food, her in sharp heels and me in a pair of decade-old docs.

When we reach the top, she turns to me and asks, *Do you have a cigarette?* Her words blend together like an afterthought, something she could utter to any stranger on the street.

I remember that Jacques snuck a pack of Vogues into my pocket as I was leaving the club, told me French women love their smokes, like he knew. Maybe he did. He also told me never to fall asleep on a stranger's couch. Perhaps he's an oracle.

When I manage to produce a cigarette, she places it between her lips and offers me her lighter. I can feel her initials monogrammed into the side. EJB. I flick it open, and the flame makes her smoulder at the edges. I light the Vogue for her.

We're standing at the edge of the rooftop, our knees touching the concrete barrier. She laughs during an exhale, like, *You took so long I thought you went back to America*.

I say, *I didn't think you'd care*.

She just rolls her shoulders back, stiffens her spine a little bit. *Where are you really from?*

I consider lying. New York. Malibu. Los Angeles, like throwing darts at the Cool Board. Instead, I land on *Idaho, but I moved to Portland*.

Such ugly names for cities, she says, No romance in them at all.

Not much romance here, either. I counter. The only reason I know where the Eiffel Tower is from this arrondissement is because it projects a beam of light from its tip, like the skeleton of a lighthouse, run through with veins of electric tubing.

She hums her agreement, decides that *Yes, it's quite ugly.*

So, is there beauty without ugliness, romance without reason? I ask.

She almost laughs, I can see it in the tremor of her lips. *You think you are a Schiller expert, quoting my notes?*

More of a detective, I assure her.

She shakes her head at me and says, *You will extinguish my mystery, and then what will you have?*

I don't have the space to answer. She grinds her cigarette beneath her heel, and seconds later a piece of the sky catches fire. The sounds of the fireworks are dampened by the air between here and there. I don't mind it much, because a beat after I see the lights reflect in her irises, I'm kissing her.

Pardon my cliché, but it's tradition in America, I say.

She just smiles, tasting like vodka and tobacco and tinted wax.

The next day, I find her lipstick discarded beside my toothbrush jar.

BY
**SARAH
KATHARINA
KAYß**



**PEAR
LIGHTS**
BY
**ISAAC
SZETO**

Rotgut and gaps all others all of it is over. Bear with me in sighs and whiteness all of it is gaps. Out out into the world full of innards breathe in out in out all of it is. Your body is a pear your body is appearing as sighs and whiteness all of it is innards all of it is gaps. The crying is choir-song all is so calm all is so bright all of it is. Singing fissure all white in sighs barely attenuated so much longing in out in out and I gape for breath and a blinking sort of freedom. All sorts in out like pearlights all of this is whiteness all of it is. Body streamers arms and legs each limb breathing light out into the world of song her body is new all of it is. She is a sigh she bearing fruit in gaps all of the breath in the world cannot contain her. Blinking see me eyes white wider all the little lights of her eyes now uncontained in the world of the pear. Hush is she when barely attenuated wide eyes wide open longing smartish fable. Heavy breaths white breather into the world and the lights of her eyes attenuated then blinking and thrust back in out of song. The seraph is in whiteness and she bore of her innards the fruit of her womb. Out sang the lighthouse of her body indiscreet and glowing this bear of a child this momentary whiteness. World is a fable of arms and legs and each blinking light is a choir note that sings only colour. Leave room for gaps because gaps are a way to order the harmonics of a situation. Lost I see eyes light up lungs inflate musically and then it is all over. Breather for the last time in gaps and fissures all of it is glowing all of it is glowing eyes attenuated song is over breath is slowing thrust back into innards and longing to bear her again.

contributor bios

a. (p.) alkubaisy is an up-and-coming iraqi-canadian writer, and is currently pursuing a double major in english (honours) and sociology. inspired by women's literary traditions, alkubaisy's writing tends to tackle subjects of love, power, sexuality, and religion.

Allison Keizer recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Calgary, and is currently working on her Bachelor of Education. She enjoys hiking and swimming, and is working on combining her photography with her writing. She hopes to become an elementary school teacher and pursue writing throughout her career.

Amy LeBlanc is currently completing a BA in English Literature and Creative writing at the University of Calgary. She is an avid reader, cat lover, and poet, but focuses most of her energy on writing short fiction. She is hoping to pursue a career in writing and is currently working on her first story cycle.

Ben Robinson has only ever lived in Hamilton, ON. So far, he has published a poem about a baseball field, another about his run down student home, and one about chips. His first collection, *Strong Omen*, is forthcoming.

Christopher Barnes, British poet, won the Northern Arts Writers Award in 1998 and published his debut poetry collection, *LOVEBITES*, in 2005. As a poet taking an active part in the literary circles of his home community in Newcastle, UK, Christopher is involved in events, readings, and workshops; his works include radio programmes for Web community radio and a digital film with artists Kate Sweeney and Julie Ballands. Christopher also collaborated on the art and literature project *How Gay Are Your Genes*, facilitated by poet Lisa Mathews, exhibited at The Hatton Gallery at Newcastle University.

Claudia Wilde is a first-year English student at the University of Calgary. She has lived in Finland and enjoys writing poetry and prose.

Connor Grey is a photographer and photojournalist who grew up in British Columbia but has lived in Alberta for the last nine years. Wandering all over Calgary, he looks for images of apathy to capture and finds no shortage.

Constantine Combitis is a local actor, playwright, and director for the stage, as well as an aspiring novelist, poet, and songwriter. He has a BA in English from the University of Calgary with a concentration in Creative Writing and a minor in Drama. Constantine is the Artistic Director and founder of Peripheral Theatre, a new company in the city focused on creating transgressive and unorthodox theatre. Recent writing and directing credits for the stage include *Quarantine* (Peripheral Theatre Co., Dec. 2015), *Opaque and All Roads Diverge* (Search Tower Co., Common Ground Festival 2014 and 2015), and *Stag/Stagette* (Calgary Regional One Act Festival, 2015).

Darren C. Demaree is the author of five poetry collections, most recently *The Nineteen Steps Between Us* (2016, After the Pause). He is the Managing Editor of the Best of the Net Anthology. Currently, he is living in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

derek beaulieu is the author or editor of 16 books, the most recent of which are *The Unbearable Contact with Poets* (If P then Q, 2015) and *kern* (Les Figues, 2014). He is the publisher of the

acclaimed no press and is the visual poetry editor at *UBUWeb*. beaulieu has exhibited his work across Canada, the United States and Europe and is an award-winning instructor at the Alberta College of Art + Design. He is the 2014-2016 Poet Laureate of Calgary, Canada.

Francesco Aprile (1985, Italy) is a freelance journalist, poet, critic, and essayist. In 2010 he became a member of the literary movement called New Page: Narrativa in Store, founded in 2009 by Francesco Saverio Dòdaro, for which he published 37 novels and 10 poetry collections. In April 2011 he founded Contrabbando Poetico, an artistic research group, and also founded the experimental magazine *www.utsanga.it* with Cristiano Caggiula in 2014. His works and books of visual-poetries are archived in libraries worldwide. His research is documented in *An Anthology of Asemic Handwriting* (2013), with his most recent publications being "Dietro le stagioni" (2015, with text by Cristiano Caggiula) and "Exegesis of a renunciation" (2014, with texts by Bartolomé Ferrando and Cristiano Caggiula).

Guy Traiber was born and raised in the sweltering Middle East and found love in the cold mountains of Europe. After a decade of travelling extensively throughout India and South-East Asia, he is now pitched again on the soil of his youth. He studies Sociology, Political Science, and Chinese Medicine, and finds that they all relate. His writing has appeared in (very) few journals and has been rejected by many well-known publications. You can talk to him via email at o13m@yahoo.com.

Ian Whistle has been published in *filling Station*, *CRASH: a litzine*, *Moss Trill*, and *the Shadowy Technicians: New Ottawa Poets* (2000). He has had small poetry publications appear with jwcurry's *1cent* and Ken Hunt's *Spacecraft*, and occasionally blogs at <http://ianjwhistle.blogspot.ca/>

Isaac Celis is currently studying English, previously Psychology, at the University of Calgary. He intends to pursue a Master's degree in English following his undergrad. Isaac thinks himself to be a pretty lazy writer, preferring to make use of other's voices through recontextualization rather than his own. Isaac's writing is usually a mishmash of numerous influences, from cyberpunk to anime.

Isaac Szeto is a fourth year English student at the University of Calgary. All of his creative work is in some way about moments, experiences, and evocations of spaces. In all creative pursuits Isaac strives not to represent or articulate things, but to bring about the thing itself; he will forever be working towards this goal.

Jamie Gray has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the glass program at the Alberta College of Art + Design, where she focused her energies on sculptural and kiln-formed glass of a narrative nature. She is currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts (Glass) at the University of Edinburgh.

John Gosslee edits *PANK* and *Fjords Review*, and directs *C&R Press*. In 2016 his poetry appears in *Poetry Ireland*, *Lumina*, *Handsome* and many others.

Kalyn Schmidt is a fourth-year Bachelor of Arts student in English, graduating from the University of Calgary while attending classes at the Red Deer College campus. Her interests include performing ABBA repertoire to her showerhead, consuming soup in Herculean quantities, and determining whether or not a certain film should really have passed the Bechdel test. If lost, she can most likely be found in the CanLit section of the library, or soliciting her patient fiancé to please listen to more of her feminist poetry. She hopes to edit, write, and read for a living. Will work for Triscuits.

Kathy Pham is a Canadian (hyphen) Vietnamese writer and undergraduate English Literature student at the University of Calgary. She is currently completing her first short story cycle with an emphasis on the tensions of hybridity and also cyberpunk, when she can fit it in.

Kitty Hardy has been scribbling words since she was a wee lass, trying to write a new life for herself in the boring backwoods of Northern Alberta. She hid from reality in the forest and put pen to paper until dusk made the words blur together. With this upbringing, most of her work examines how humans relate to the natural world; she explores how we have separated ourselves from nature and attempts to insert us back into the eco-system. She shows how we affect the natural world, and how it, in turn, affects us. Kitty believes that art, if it is to serve its function, should depict the world as changeable, and also help to change it.

Lance Nizami has no formal training in the Arts. He started taking pictures in 2011 with a fixed-lens 28mm-equivalent Leica X1 (no filters, no tripod), and has since had non-manipulated pictures printed in *Existere* (two covers), *Kestrel* (cover and interior), *Toad Suck Review*, and *Southwestern American Literature* (cover), amongst others.

Madelaine Caritas Longman was born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, grew up in Calgary, Alberta, and currently lives in Montreal, Quebec. Madelaine's work has appeared in journals including *The Battered Suitcase*, *filling Station*, *Room*, and *Frogpond*.

Michael e. Casteels is the author of over a dozen chapbooks of poetry. His first full-length collection of poetry, *The Last White House At The End Of The Row Of White Houses*, is forthcoming from Invisible Publishing. He lives in Kingston, where he runs Puddles of Sky Press.

Michael Lee Johnson lived in Canada for ten years during the Vietnam era; he is now known as the Illinois poet, from Itasca, IL. Today, he is a poet, freelance writer, poetographer (blending poetry with photography), and small business owner in Itasca, Illinois. He edits nine different poetry sites and has been published in more than 875 small press magazines in 27 countries. Michael is the author of *The Lost American: From Exile to Freedom*, several chapbooks of poetry, including *From Which Place the Morning Rises*, *Challenge of Night and Day*, and *Chicago Poems*. He also has over 80 poetry videos on YouTube.

Paul Meunier is currently majoring in English at the University of Calgary, intending to pursue Graduate Studies with a concentration in Creative Writing. Paul has a fine arts background in Photography (Alberta College of Art + Design, 2004), and he is interested in exploring forms of writing where art and poetry intersect, either visually or conceptually.

Sacha Archer was born in Hamilton, Ontario in 1984. He earned his BA in English Literature in 2008 from Trent University. In his last year at Trent, Sacha won the 2008 P.K. Page Irwin Prize for his poetry. In 2010, he was chosen to participate in the Elise Partridge Mentor Program. His work has appeared in *ditch poetry*, *Eunoia Review*, *491 Magazine*, *filling Station*, and *ACTA Victoriana*.

Sarah Katharina Kayß is an internationally published author and winner of the manuscript award of the Literaturwerk of the German Writers Association (2013) for her poetry and essay collection *Ich mag die Welt so wie sie ist* (2014). She edits the literary magazine *The Transnational* and is currently a final-year PhD student in the War Studies Department of King's College London. www.SarahKatharinaKayss.com

Stan Rogal's work has appeared, sometimes in translation, in numerous literary magazines and anthologies in Canada, the US, and Europe, including *Rampike*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Grain*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *Existere*, *Scrivener*, and *The New Quarterly*. Stan is the author of 19 books: 4 novels, 4 story collections, and 11 poetry collections, with a new novel appearing in 2016. Stan is also a produced playwright, actor and director.

Stephen McQuiggan liked nothing more than walking under ladders, breaking mirrors, and taunting magpies until he fell into a sudden and inexplicable coma. His first novel, *A Pig's View Of Heaven*, is available now from Grinning Skull Press.

Zac Slams is a collage and video artist currently working in Calgary. She has previously exhibited her weirdo art at Untitled Art Society, Fairy Tales Queer Film Festival, Arts Commons, and Particle + Wave Festival of Media Arts. She is also a student at the University of Calgary. Right now, Slams is producing a queer video mixtape called *Twink Party Sex Tape* with her hot boyfriend for EMMEDIA's "Open Access" program.

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